

PANAMA #717

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DIVISION OF GEOGRAPHY & CARTOGRAPHY
* DEPARTMENT OF STATE *Panama, R. P.
November 1, 1945UNRESTRICTED

No. 3160

SUBJECT: Panama-Costa Rican Border Controversy.

The Honorable
The Secretary of State
Washington.

Sir:

I have the honor to refer to the Embassy's despatch no. 3130, October 30, 1945 regarding the discussion in the Constitutional Assembly of Article 3 of the proposed constitution concerning the boundaries of the Republic of Panama and the frontier between Panama and Costa Rica.

In the session of October 29 when the above-mentioned article was discussed, Dr. Ricardo J. Alfaro, Minister of Foreign Relations, gave a lengthy history of the Costa Rican-Panama border dispute in an attempt to clarify the responsibility for the 1941 demarcation treaty between these two countries. Dr. Alfaro mentioned the Laudo Loubet line which he alleged gave certain territory in the Pacific to Costa Rica that had formerly belonged to Colombia and later to Panama; then the White Decision which traced a new line which did not have any contact whatsoever with the Laudo Loubet line; and finally the Arias Madrid-Calderon Guardia treaty of 1941 which granted Panama nothing but was simply a variation of the White Decision.

At this point an engineer who had been invited to discuss the technical aspects of these border lines stated that in both the White Decision and in the 1941 treaty the territorial loss suffered by Panama was around 270,000 hectares. Moreover, some 500 families were paying for this act by being left on the other side of the border where they were compelled to become naturalized Costa Rican citizens. He also stated that the land in the north was more fertile.

A number of the Deputies of the Constitutional Assembly denounced Arnulfo Arias as being a traitor to his country to have executed a treaty depriving Panama of so much territory and that even during the period of Yankee Imperialism, which was superseded by the Good Neighbor Policy, did anything occur to compare to this. Moreover, it was alleged, Costa Rica still owed her share of the expenses incurred in the 1941 demarcation.

Respectfully yours,

For the Charge d'Affaires, U.S.

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UNRESTRICTEDV. Lansing Collins, Jr.
Third Secretary of Embassy